

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 01806 01 OF 02 082036Z

70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 AID-20 EB-11 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 STR-08

OMB-01 CEA-02 COME-00 FRB-02 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06

SIL-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /192 W  
----- 107252

P R 081943Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7840

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 01806

E O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK, PINT

SUBJECT: NUM SPURNS HEATH PLEA TO POSTPONE STRIKE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE NUM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VOTED  
OVERWHELMINGLY TO GO ON STRIKE AS PLANNED FROM SATURDAY  
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PAGE 02 LONDON 01806 01 OF 02 082036Z

MIDNIGHT ON FEBRUARY 10TH, THUS REJECTING THE PLEA OF

PRIME MINISTER HEATH AND, IN THE PROCESS, PERHAPS STRENGTHENING THE ELECTORAL CHANCES OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. MOST CERTAINLY, IT WILL LEND CREDENCE TO HEATH'S ARGUMENT THAT THERE ARE NOW FORCES IN CONTROL OF THE NUM WHO ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH BRINGING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT THAN SOLVING THE INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE. ALTHOUGH PUBLIC REPORTS OF THE VOTE DESCRIBED IT AS NEARLY "UNANIMOUS," AN AUTHORITATIVE NUM SOURCE TOLD US THAT ABOUT "HALF A DOZEN" OF THE 27-MAN NUM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VOTED TO POSTPONE THE STRIKE.

END SUMMARY

2. THE NUM SOURCE SAID THAT NUM PRESIDENT JOE GORMLEY AND "ONE OR TWO OTHERS" HAD TRIED TO ARGUE THAT "IN A POLITICAL SITUATION," THAT IS, AN ELECTION PERIOD, A STRIKE WOULDN'T HELP AND THAT SINCE THERE WOULD BE NO EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT FOR THREE TO FOUR WEEKS THERE WOULD BE NO POINT IN GOING ON STRIKE. THOSE WHO OPPOSED THIS VIEW -- AND PREVAILED -- ARGUED THAT THE ISSUE WAS SIMPLY INDUSTRIAL IN CHARACTER AND THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO CALL IT OFF FOR ANY POLITICAL MOTIVE, WHETHER TO HELP THE LABOR, LIBERAL, COMMUNIST, CONSERVATIVE OR ANY OTHER PARTY. BUT (AND THIS MAY HAVE BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT ARGUMENT) THE STRIKE WILL STRENGTHEN THE NUM BARGAINING POSITION BY DRAINING OFF COAL STOCKS AT AN INCREASING RATE. (THE NUM HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL PICKET PITS, POWER STATIONS AND OTHER LOCATIONS, BUT PICKETING WILL BE LIMITED, ACCORDING TO NUM PRESIDENT GORMLEY, TO SIX MEN TO EACH LOCATION.)

3. THE TUC FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HAS A MEETING SCHEDULED THIS AFTERNOON. A MAJOR AIM OF THE MEETING, ACCORDING TO SIR SIDNEY GREENE, A KEY TUC LEADER AND A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, IS TO WORK OUT WAYS AND MEANS TO ASSIST THE STRIKING MINERS. THE TUC WILL SUPPORT THEM OF COURSE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, WILL CALL ON ITS AFFILIATES TO AVOID CROSSING PICKET LINES SET UP BY THE NUM, AND TO CONSIDER OTHER FORMS OF PRACTICAL SUPPORT. FINANCIAL SUPPORT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LONDON 01806 01 OF 02 082036Z

IS NOT AN IMPORTANT PROBLEM, ACCORDING TO SIR SIDNEY -- AT LEAST NOT FOR THE MOMENT. WHILE THE NUM NATIONAL ORGANIZATION HAS FEW FUNDS, SOME OF THE REGIONAL

ORGANIZATIONS HAVE CONSIDERABLE FINANCES AT THEIR DISPOSAL. SIR SIDNEY IS CONVINCED THAT THE MINERS CAN HOLD OUT FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD, CERTAINLY FOR AT LEAST THE SEVEN WEEKS OF THE 1972 STRIKE.

4. SIR SIDNEY, WHO IS A STAUNCH TUC RIGHT-WINGER, IS BITTER OVER THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT UTILIZE THE TUC'S OFFER TO SETTLE THE STRIKE. HE BELIEVES THAT THE GOVERNMENT "HAWKS" AROUND HEATH (BARBER, HOWE AMONG OTHERS) HAD TURNED HEATH AWAY FROM THOSE WHO SOUGHT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, THE "DOVES", PARTICULARLY WHITELAW.

5. SIR SIDNEY WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON HEATH'S ANNOUNCEMENT LAST EVENING (FEBRUARY 7) THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BEGIN EXAMINING IMMEDIATELY THE MINERS' CASE THROUGH THE SETTING UP OF PAY BOARD MACHINERY TO DEAL WITH PAY RELATIVITIES. THE TUC OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THIS WAS ALL WELL AND GOOD BUT THAT THE TUC HAD NOT YET AGREED TO SUCH MACHINERY NOR HAD THE MINERS. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT RULE OUT ITS USE IN AN EVENTUAL N/A

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PAGE 01 LONDON 01806 02 OF 02 082022Z

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 01806

SETTLEMENT.

6. COMMENT: THE DECISION OF THE NUM TO CARRY OUT THE STRIKE APPEARS TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT TACTICAL WEAKNESS, ARGUED IN TERMS OF NUM INTERESTS, AND SEEMS HARDLY DESIGNED TO ASSIST THE LABOR PARTY CAMPAIGN TO RETURN  
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PAGE 02 LONDON 01806 02 OF 02 082022Z

TO POWER. VIEWED IN PURELY TRADE UNION TERMS, MANY AUTHORITATIVE OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE MINERS WOULD HAVE OBTAINED WITHIN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE MORE CASH ON THE BARRELHEAD, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF HEATH'S DECISION TO SET UP AN EXAMINATION OF THEIR SPECIAL PROBLEMS FORTHWITH. EVEN IF THEY STAYED PUT, THIS ARGUMENT GOES, THEY WOULD HAVE WON THEIR WAR FOR MORE CASH. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEIR DECISION TO MAINTAIN THE STRIKE IN THE FACE OF HEATH APPEAL WILL HELP TO JUSTIFY IN THE PUBLIC MIND THE CHARGE THAT THE NUM IS DRIVEN MORE BY ITS MILITANTS, INCLUDING ITS COMMUNIST VICE PRESIDENT MCGAHEY, WHO WANTS TO BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT, THAN BY TRADITIONAL TRADE UNION INTERESTS. AT LEAST MORE VOTERS THAN MIGHT HAVE DONE SO BEFORE WILL ACCEPT THE VIEW, ENUNCIATED BY MANY GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND REPORTED IN THE PRESS FOR MANY WEEKS, THAT THERE WERE "REDS UNDER THE BEDS," AT LEAST UNDER THOSE USED BY SOME IMPORTANT MINERS' LEADERS.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, COAL, ELECTIONS, LABOR STRIKES, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMMITTEES, MINING INDUSTRY  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 08 FEB 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION EUR  
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**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
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**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
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**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 27 MAR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <31 MAY 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

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30 JUN 2005

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**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
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**Subject:** NUM SPURNS HEATH PLEA TO POSTPONE STRIKE  
**TAGS:** ELAB, PINT, UK, NUM  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005